



# PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **POLK COUNTY MAN SENTENCED ON IRS CHARGES**

Tampa, FL - United States District Court Judge James D. Whittemore today sentenced MICHAEL K. CROSS, a Polk County based contractor, to a sentence of five months' imprisonment, to be followed by a term of 36 months of supervised release, with a special condition that he serve five months of that supervised release sentence in home detention. He further ordered CROSS to pay restitution to the Internal Revenue Service in the amount of \$80,562.00. The Court sentenced CROSS on his conviction after his plea of guilty to one count of conspiring with his wife to obstruct the functions of the Internal Revenue Service. CROSS pled guilty to that charge on December 18, 2001.

According to the indictment and the plea agreement, the defendant entered into a conspiracy with his wife to evade payment of a substantial amount of income which he earned while he was an employee of the Sports Authority. In his job at the Sports Authority, MICHAEL CROSS was in a position to authorize payments by the Sports Authority to

companies which performed maintenance and construction work on new or renovated Sports Authority stores. Unbeknownst to the Sports Authority, MICHAEL CROSS authorized contracts for construction work by two contracting companies which he and his wife secretly controlled. During the tax years 1994 and 1995, the CROSSES then failed to disclose the income from those projects on their personal Individual Income Tax 1040 Return Forms. In this manner, they failed to report in excess of \$259,000 in income. The tax loss as a consequence of this action was approximately \$80,562.00.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jay L. Hoffer of the Tampa Division.